



Information Bites...

Bite sized chunks of information for families that include a member with a disability

My child has just been diagnosed... What now?

My Child has just been diagnosed with a disability. What do I do?

Meeting with the individual who conducted the assessment can help to ensure you have a clear understanding about the disability and the next steps for your child. It can be beneficial to request the following information during the meeting:

- **Explanation of the assessment** - Request that the specialist explain the assessment, clarifying the strengths and limitations your child may have as well as recommendations.
- **Copy of the assessment** - You may want to have a copy of the assessment for your records. It can be helpful to have the information for reference at a later date, when meeting with service providers, or when applying for funding.
- **On-going contact or follow-up assessments** - Inquire what further contact you will have with the organization where the assessment took place and whether there will be a follow-up assessment.
- **Referrals** - Inquire whether referral(s) have been made to appropriate agencies or service providers.
- **Resources** - Ask for information on the disability as well as agencies that provide information, support and programs.

Parents Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are entitled to be informed about the full range of services and supports that are available and to make their own informed choices about the types of services they feel will best meet the needs of their family. When working with service systems, parents have rights that protect the privacy of their child and their family. Information given to a service provider is treated as confidential and cannot be shared without the consent of the parent. Parents must also ensure that information about their child and family remains current, and that any changes are reported in a timely manner

What are my rights as a parent?

- To request and receive information
- To provide consent
- To have a central role in the planning process
- To have families privacy protected

What are my responsibilities?

- Keep child's information current
- Provide relevant information
- Participate in recommended activities with your child

How can I advocate for my child & maintain good relations with service providers?

All individuals involved in service planning have a vital role to play. From observing and interacting with your child everyday across various activities and circumstances, you have insights into your child's interests, strengths and needs. Professionals offer a specialized knowledge in their own area. As your child becomes older, he or she can also contribute important information on how a program is meeting his or her needs. An effective service plan can be created when all of the parties come together. The following tips can help to ensure your child is receiving the services that he or she needs.

- Learn about the disability
- Inquire about information sharing between agencies
- Learn about available services
- Take notes
- Ask questions
- Share information

What is a family centered philosophy?

Family centered practice recognizes that parents are experts regarding their children and are key to their children's healthy development. This approach incorporates the strengths, priorities and cultural influences of families into services. With parents bringing valuable awareness of their child's interests, dislikes, strengths and needs and professionals providing expertise in their area; an effective service plan can be developed.

What can I do to support my child after being diagnosed with a disability?

There are many ways that you can support your child after he or she has been diagnosed with a disability. Learn about the disability, discuss equipment and devices, be positive, talk about strengths and weaknesses and connect with others. If there are specialists who work with your child, they can provide activities for you to do with your child to address specific developmental areas.

Take care of yourself

Although it will be natural to isolate yourself at this time, connect with others. Use your support network; it is difficult for one person to be someone's sole source of support. Include family members, disability associations, family counselors, and friends into your support network. Find a support group for yourself and your family to be a part of. While raising a child with a disability may present some challenges for a couple, there is not necessarily a negative impact on relationships. A relationship may be strengthened through increased communication, division of responsibilities, development of coping skills and spending time together.



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